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Dedication Ceremonies Unveil Lawrence University's \$15 Million Residence Hall

Posted on: October 10th, 2003 by Rick Peterson

Having already lived in Colman, Ormsby and Plantz halls, as well as Draheim, one of the college's small residence houses, senior Carrie Ryan qualifies as an expert on campus housing at Lawrence University as nearly anyone. So when she raves about her current home in the new Hiatt Hall, trust her.

"A lot of the other residence halls are great in their own way and each of them has its own individual strengths, but I think Hiatt Hall is a pretty significant upgrade," said Ryan, who is living in one of the building's numerous four-person suites.

Hiatt Hall, Lawrence's new \$15.3 million, 79,500-square-foot, attention-grabbing addition to student housing, receives its formal unveiling and dedication — complete with ribbon-cutting ceremonies — Thursday, Oct. 16 at 4 p.m.

Nearly 18 months in the making from ground-breaking to dedication, Hiatt Hall is named in honor of Stanley and Clara Hiatt, the parents of 1958 Lawrence graduate Kim Hiatt Jordan, whose generous \$8 million gift made the building's construction possible.

"So much about this place is great," Ryan said of Hiatt Hall. "The rooms are incredible, the public spaces are unbelievably beautiful with great views of the Fox River. The kitchen areas are huge."

When junior Jamie Marincic walked into Hiatt for the first time this fall, she couldn't help but think, "This is ridiculous."

"I was convinced I had just entered an upscale hotel," said Marincic, who previously lived in Sage and Ormsby halls. "The

high ceilings make all the rooms seem huge and the amount of natural light throughout the building is incredible. If I don't get back in here next year, I'll have a hard time living anywhere else on campus."

With 183 beds, Hiatt Hall is the largest living space on the Lawrence campus. The L-shaped building's 63 living quarters are divided among 10 single rooms (eight of which are occupied by residence life advisors), 33 four-person suites and 20 two-person suites, each with a shared bathroom and common living space.

"Hiatt Hall is a wonderful, concrete example of Lawrence's commitment to residential life and the importance of the student experience that extends beyond the classroom, lab or studio," said Nancy Truesdell, Lawrence dean of students. "By all accounts, students have quickly settled in, made themselves comfortable and are enjoying the experience of sharing a suite with a small group of friends within a larger residence hall environment."

Not only has the comfort level been raised considerably for those students lucky enough to own a Hiatt Hall address, Truesdell says the building has helped non-Hiatt residents by creating some much-needed breathing room in other halls.

"The additional beds Hiatt provides enabled us to reclaim floor lounges in other residence halls and return them to their intended purposes," Truesdell explained. "That's been a benefit that all students are enjoying."

In addition to all suite-style living quarters on the building's two "wings," three of Hiatt's four floors have a large central kitchen area, complete with refrigerator, stove, two microwave ovens, dishwasher and a sink. Each floor also boasts a large furnished lounge — the one on the fourth floor features a fireplace — as well as a spacious room for quiet study.

As Ryan sees it, the privilege of being the first residents of Hiatt Hall comes with a commensurate degree of obligation.

“This is like our house. We each can take a sense of ownership in being the first students to live here that you couldn’t necessarily take in the other halls where hundreds of students have lived before you. We’re the caretakers of Hiatt Hall for the next group of residents and that is a big responsibility.

“We’ve all watched this building going up the past year,” Ryan added. “It’s very easy to be excited about going to Lawrence these days when you can live in a place as beautiful as Hiatt Hall.”

The building was designed by VOA Associates, a Chicago architectural firm, and Oscar J. Boldt Construction of Appleton served as the project’s general contractor.